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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VATICAN 000483

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR EUR/WE MENNUTI, S/ES/O, NEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/06/2013

TAGS: [IZ](#) [PREL](#) [PREL](#) [PREL](#) [PREL](#) [VT](#) [VTIZ](#) [VTIZ](#) [VTIZ](#)

SUBJECT: HOLY SEE REACTION TO SECRETARY'S UNSC
PRESENTATION; POPE TO MEET WITH TARIQ AZIZ

FEBRUARY 14

REF: VATICAN 5756

CLASSIFIED BY: DCM BRENT HARDT. REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

SUMMARY

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11. (C) HOLY SEE OFFICIALS ARE STILL ASSESSING THE SECRETARY'S UNSC PRESENTATION, AND HAVE INDICATED THEY WILL PROVIDE A CONSIDERED RESPONSE AFTER REMOVAL. THE HOLY SEE CONTINUES TO OPPOSE WAR AS A MEANS TO ACHIEVE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S OBJECTIVES IN IRAQ, AND IS INTENSIFYING ITS THAT TARIQ AZIZ WOULD MEET WITH THE POPE FEBRUARY 14. THE HOLY SEE'S DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER TOLD US THE POPE WOULD URGE BAGHDAD TO COMPLY WITH ALSO EXPRESS SOLIDARITY WITH THE SUFFERING OF THE IRAQI PEOPLE. GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER JOSCHKA FISCHER WILL ALSO MEET WITH THE POPE FEBRUARY

RECOGNITION OF SADDAM'S DANGER, BUT OPPOSED TO FORCE

12. (C) IN EMBASSY'S INITIAL CONTACTS WITH THE HOLY SEE FOLLOWING THE SECRETARY'S PRESENTATION TO THE UNSC, VATICAN OFFICIALS HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY ARE STILL ASSESSING THE INFORMATION PROVIDED (WE DIRECTOR MONS. FRANCO COPPOLA TOLD POLOFF THAT THE VATICAN "DOES NOT DISAGREE" THAT SADDAM IS A DANGER BOTH TO HIS
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PEOPLE AND TO THE WORLD, AND SHOULD BE REMOVED. THIS GOES FURTHER THAN PREVIOUS STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE RECOGNIZED SADDAM'S DANGER, BUT DID NOT VIEW THAT WAR IS NOT THE BEST WAY TO EFFECT CHANGE IN BAGHDAD -- THOUGH HE DID NOT OFFER ANY ALTERNATIVE. PRESSED ON THE SPECIFICS OF POWELL'S NECESSITY OF WAR (THOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED TO THE REPORTED THAT HE HAD NOT SEEN THE PRESENTATION AND WAS BASING HIS COMMENTS ON TODAY'S MEDIA REF

AZIZ TO MEET POPE

13. (U) PRIOR TO THE SECRETARY'S PRESENTATION, LE MONDE AND FIGARO HAD REPORTED THAT IRAQI FOREIGN MINISTER TARIQ AZIZ INFORMED REPORTERS HE WOULD MEET WITH THE POPE IN RESPONSE TO AZIZ'S REQUEST. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER PAROLIN TOLD DCM THAT THE POPE WOULD TELL IRAQ TO COLLABORATE "WITHOUT RESERVATION" WITH THE UN INSECURITY COUNCIL.
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SUFFERING OF THE IRAQI PEOPLE (HE HAD LAST MET WITH AZIZ IN 1998 WHEN AZIZ WAS TOURING EUROPE SEEKING TO LIFT UN SANCTIONS) AND WOULD MAKE ANOTHER MEETING WITH THE POPE. AZIZ WILL ALSO LIKELY MEET WITH SECRETARY OF STATE POWELL'S CATHOLIC ACTIVIST FATHER JEAN-MARIE BENJAMIN, WHO HAS MADE DOCUMENTARIES ABOUT THE CONDITIONS OF THE IRAQI PEOPLE, PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN ARRANGING FOR THE POPE'S VISIT TO IRAQ.

CATHOLIC MEDIA STILL NOT CONVINCED

14. (U) VATICAN-LINKED MEDIA GENERALLY REMAINED SKEPTICAL FOLLOWING THE SECRETARY'S PRESENTATION. ITALY'S LEADING CATHOLIC DAILY, AVVENIRE, CALLED FOR A MORE PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO THE IRAQI SITUATION.
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ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	DS-00	VC-00
	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	VCE-00	NEA-00	NSAE-00
	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-01	SAS-00
	SWCI-00	/002W					

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FM AMEMBASSY VATICAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 VATICAN 000483

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WERE SKEPTICAL BEFORE YESTERDAY ABOUT THE NECESSITY OF DISARMING IRAQ REMAIN SO." IN THE SAME PAPER, HOWEVER, ANOTHER ANALYST CRITICIZES THE F

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COMMENT

15. (C) AS THE HOLY SEE INTENSIFIES ITS ENGAGEMENT TO AVOID WAR, IT HAS BEGUN TO SHIFT ITS EMPHASIS FROM MORAL ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE MORALITY OF PREVENTIVE WAR (REFTEL) TO MORE PRAGMATIC STRATEGIC ARGUMENTS. WOULD "RISK IRRITATING A BILLION MUSLIMS" -- REFLECTED THE VATICAN'S DESIRE TO ENGAGE BEYOND THE MORAL ARGUMENTS TO THE PRACTICAL ARGUMENTS FEBRUARY 7 -- AT FISCHER'S REQUEST -- REFLECTS THE DEEPENING ENGAGEMENT WE CAN EXPECT FROM THE HOLY SEE AS THE THREAT OF WAR INCREASES. THE HC PULL THEM OUT. EMBASSY WILL BE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THE WEEK AHEAD TO MAKE THE U.S. CASE ON IRAQ WITH THE VISITS OF CATHOLIC SCHOLAR MICHAEL NC VATICAN OFFICIALS FEBRUARY 12. DASD BRZEZINSKI WILL ALSO MEET WITH FM TAURAN FEBRUARY 7 TO REINFORCE THE U.S. CASE AGAINST IRAQ.

